

LONE WOLF

AND

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道
士

CUB

VOLUME 9

**ECHO OF
THE ASSASSIN**

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連水狼

story
KAZUO KOIKE

art
GOSEKI KOJIMA



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OF THE
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VOLUME

9

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



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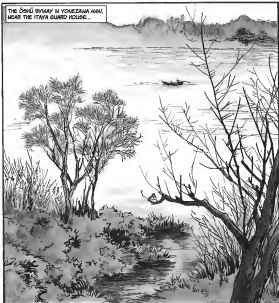
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the forty-fifth



Wife of the Heart

THE JŌSHŪ BRARY IN YONEZAWA AREA,
NEAR THE ITAYA GUARD HOUSE...





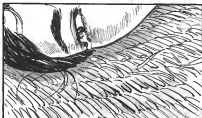
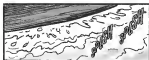






















THE
WAY THINGS IS
NOW, WE COULDN'T
LOOK YER OLD
PA IN THE
FACE.

....
....



OF COURSE
YA HAVE TILN
HELP ANYMORE-
SAMA-HE
SAVED YER
LIFE!

BUT
THERE BE
LIMITS AND
SOLLIN' YER
BODY...



DON'T
SAY IT!
NOT
THAT!



I-PLEASE
DON'T SAY
IT...JUST
LIKE THAT...

I GOTTA
SAY IT, O-CHIN!
IT'S BREAKIN' OUR
HEARTS WATCHIN'
YA.



IF HAYASHI-
SAMA WAS
FAMILY, OR YER
ANYMORE, IT
MIGHT BE
DIFFERENT.

BUT HE
AIN'T! SO WE
GOTTA SPEAK
OUT.



HE'D AIN'T,
O-CHIN! SURE,
HAYASHI-SAMA
SAVED YA.

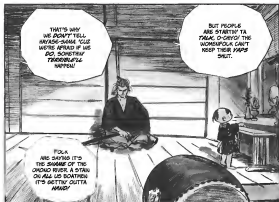
BUT
IT WAS THEM
SAMURAI THAT
WERE BAD. NOW
DON'T DO
NOTHIN'!



IF HAYASHI-
SAMA WAS
GONNA GET BETTER
AND AIN'T YOU
SOMEBODY, THAT'D
CHANGE THINGS.
BUT HE AIN'T!







THAT'S WHY
WE DON'T TELL
ANYONE—SUNNI. YOU
WERE AFRAID IF WE
DO, SOMETHING
TERRIBLE
WOULD
HAPPEN!

BUT PEOPLE
ARE STARTIN' TA
TALK. O-CHYO! THE
WOMENFOLK CAN'T
KEEP THEIR MOPS
SHUT.

FOUR
ARE SAYIN' IT'S
THE SHAME OF THE
CHANG RIVER. A STAIN
ON ALL US BOATMEN.
IT'S GETTIN' OUTTA
HAND!



AND NOW ALL
THESE YOUNG BLOODS,
EVEN SHANNON! COMIN'
HERE AGGRAND
FOR YOU!



AT
THIS RATE
THERE'S GONNA
BE A BLOWUP,
CLEAR AS
DAY!

RUMORS
ARE FLYIN',
GIRL. AND WITH
ALL THEM YOUNG
FELLERS COMIN' TO
SEE O-CHYO'S
ROOM...

...ONE DAY
IT'LL BE FISTS
AND SWORDS
FLYIN' OVER
YOU!







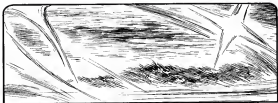




















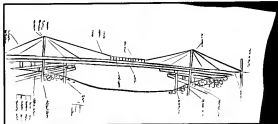




















BUT WE HAVE
TO BRIDGE IT! FOR
YONEZAWA NAVY AND
ITS PEOPLE!

WITH A
BRIDGE, TRADE
WITH EDO WILL FLOURISH!
THE NAVY AND THE PEOPLE
WILL PROSPER!

AND NO
ONE EVER AGAIN
WILL HAVE TO ONE
CROSSING IT, LIKE
YOUR POOR
FATHER.

NOW, SEE...HERE'S
MY SOLUTION-A
SUSPENSION BRIDGE!
WITH A BRIDGE, THE
LENGTH OF THE SPAN,
THE WEIGHT ON THE
SIDERS INCREASES
FOURFOLD!

AND
THE VARIOUS STRAINS ON
THE SPAN JUMP EIGHT
TO SIXTEEN-
FOLD!

BUT LOOK
AT THIS! WITH
THIS NEW CONCEPT
OF MINE, YOU CAN
DISPERSE THAT
STRESS, SIMPLY
USING SUPPORTING
CABLES!

THE
KEY WAS
CONTROLLING
THE VERTICAL
OSCILLA-
TIONS...
....

BUT GAIYO! BELIEVE
ME, WITHOUT YOU, THESE
PLANS WOULDN'T EXIST! THANK
YOUR ROVING THAT BOMB DAY
AFTER DAY WITH THOSE FRAIL
ARMS, CARING FOR ME BETTER
THAN FAMILY...

I'M
SORRY...I
IMAGINE IT'S
A BIT OVER
YOUR
HEAD.

I
THINK
YOU'VE
TALKED
FROM THE
BOTTOM
OF MY
HEART.

D-DON'T...!
I...I JUST...

DON'T
TALK LIKE THAT!
PLEASE! HAYASE-
SAMA...

GAIYO...
FROM NOW I
WANT YOU TO
LIVE FOR
YOURSELF.

HARRY...
FIND
HAPPINESS...

H-HAYASE-
SAMA...?!

DAISUKI-SAMA
IS RETURNING
FROM EDO. I'M GOING
TO MEET HIM AND
ONE HIM THESE
PLANS.

NOT
TO ASK TO
RESTORE THE
HAYASE FAMILY...
TO PROTECT
MYSELF...AND





I'VE...
DIED!!

I'M
NOT EVEN
WORTHY TO
FORGIVE
HAYASHI-SAN'S
DEED!



AM...
DIED!!

JUST
LET ME BE...
AND YOU
JUST THAT...
IS ENOUGH!







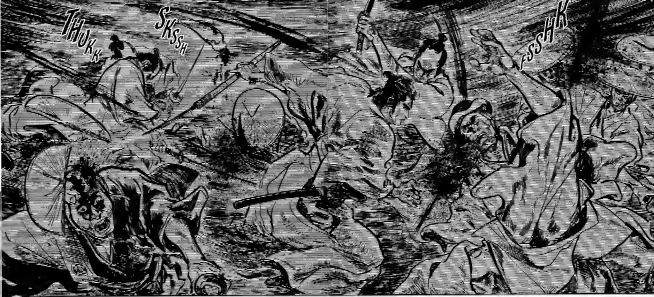
























the forty-sixth

Wandering Samurai

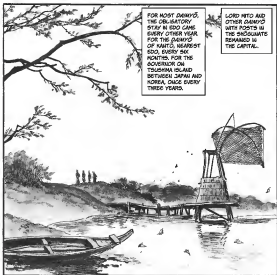


APRIL: THE SEASON
OF SAKAKI KÔTAI.



FOR MOST DAIMYÔ,
THE OBLIGATORY
STAY IN EDO CAME
EVERY OTHER YEAR.
FOR THE DAIMYÔ
OF KANTÔ, NEAREST
EDO, EVERY SIX
MONTHS. FOR THE
GOVERNOR ON
TSUSHIMA ISLAND
BETWEEN JAPAN AND
KOREA, ONCE EVERY
THREE YEARS.

LORD MITO AND
OTHER DAIMYÔ
WITH POSTS IN
THE SHÔGUNATE
REMAINED IN
THE CAPITAL.





APRIL: THE
SEASON OF THE
MUTARI-KASHI.

MUTARI-KASHI WAS THE WINDOW-DRESSING OF THE SAMURAI KOTOH SYSTEM, WHILE WEALTHY SAMURAI COULD AFFORD THE RETAINERS IT TOOK TO PROVIDE BOTH PROTECTION AND RAJESITY ON THE ROAD TO AND FROM EDO, A SAMURAI FROM A HAN WITH A TAX BASE OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND KOKU OR LESS COULD EL-AFFORD SUCH LUXURY AND SO THEY TURNED TO TEMPORARY AMONG FOOT SOLDIERS, THE LOWEST OF THE LOW IN SAMURAI SOCIETY, HIRED ON FOR THE DURATION OF THE SAMURAI KOTOH JOURNEY. ON THE OUTSIDE, LOW-RANKING JOKING ON THE INSIDE, SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER, THESE BANDS OF HIRED "STRAM HEAT" WERE THE MUTANT OFFSPRING OF THE DEFORMATIONS OF *BEAST* SOCIETY.





SERVING NO FIXED MASTER, SWITCHING
ALLEGIANCE BY THE SEASON, THE
MERCENARY *WATAI-HASHI* SOON
TURNED *LAWLESS*.















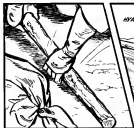


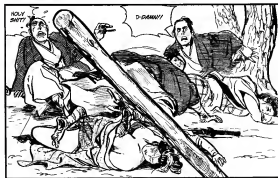


































IF YOU'D
JUST ACTED
AS WISELESS
BATTARI-KOCHI,
I COULD HAVE
TURNED MY
BACK!

IT WAS
AGAINST OF MY
BUSINESS!



BUT YOU INVOKED THE
NAME OF OUR EMPLOYER!
THAT MAKES YOU KARIYA,
AMU AMUOKU. NOT
BATTARI-KOCHI!



AND ME,
FOOL WHO
TRAVELS
WITH YOU!

WE HAVE
TO REPAIR ALL
STAINS ON THE
HONOR OF OUR
LORD! THAT'S
THE DUTY OF A LOYAL
RETAINER!

BUT...

HUNT?



AND NOW...
ONE OF YOU
WILL TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THIS
OUTRAGE!

WHA-PI?

IS
KARIED!















ON
VOLUNTARY
LEAVE, I NOW
LIVE AS A
SAMURAI-
KACHI.



IF IT
IS NOT AN
IMPOSITION,
MAY I ASK
YOUR NAME
...P



I KNEW IT
WAS YOU! IN YEARS
PAST, I HAVE SEEN
YOU FROM AFAR, SIR,
WHILE LEADING MY
LORD'S HORSE IN
OGAMI CASTLE!



...A MASTER
OF AKASAKI-
RENGO
IN THE MARUKKA
KAMU PALANGLUN
GUARD.

YOU FLATTER
ME, SIR, AND NOW I
FEAR I HAVE OFFENDED
YOUR EYES. PLEASE
UNDERSTAND THAT
CIRCUMSTANCES LEFT
ME NO CHOICE.













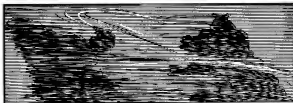






















MY JUDGMENT
PROVED CORRECT
AND THE ASSAULT
WAS REPULSED



YET THE
MOOD IN THE
HALL TURNED
AGAINST
ME!



HOW ~~DEAR~~
I CHANGING, THEY
SAID. A TRUMP ~~BOOM~~
WOULD STAY AT THE
PALANGUIN'S SIDE TO
PROTECT OUR
LORD!

OVERCONFIDENCE
IN MY SWORD HAD
LED ME TO FLAUNT MY
SKILL AND BREAK THE
WARRIOR'S CODE!



I BELIEVED THAT IF I
STAYED BY THE PALANGUIN,
WE WOULD BE SURROUNDED,
AND THE BATTLE LOST...AND
SO I TOOK THE FIGHT TO THE
ENEMY YET...MY CRITICS
HAD A POWERFUL
CASE.



I APPLIED
FOR LEAVE,
AND BECAME A
WANDERER IN
THE LAND...

...BUT I
HAD ALREADY
STOPPED
SEARCHING THE
ANSWER. WHAT
WOULD A TRUMP
BOOM HAVE
DONE?



IS IT
BUSHIDO TO
STAY BY THE
PALANGUIN, EVEN
IF IT COSTS THE
BATTLE, AND TO BE
DEFENDING ONE'S
LORD TO THE
DEATH?

DOES IT
VIOLATE BUSHIDO
TO ATTACK, COR-
RECTLY READING THE
BATTLEFIELD, CONFI-
DENT OF VICTORY, AND
ULTIMATELY PRO-
TECTING ONE'S
LORD?





ARAKAWA IS
TO ALWAYS SERVE
ONE'S LORD WITH
DEATH IN ONE'S
HEART!

THEN...
THEN WHAT
I DID
WAS...



TO ATTACK,
MOVING FOR
VICTORY! YOUR
JUDGMENT WAS
WRONG!

INDEED, YOU
WERE OVER-
CONFIDENT
IN YOUR
SWORD.



ARAKAWA...
IT'S
TRUE.

THEN
I WAS
MISTAKEN.



I SPEAK ONLY
OF THE DUTY OF A
PALACE GUARD. THE
TRUE ALIGHT IS ALWAYS
READY TO DIE FOR
HIS LORD.

AND THUS HE
SERVED TO DIE
ATTACKING. TO DIE
DEFENDING! THERE IS
NO DIFFERENCE IN
THE PURITY OF
SPIRIT!

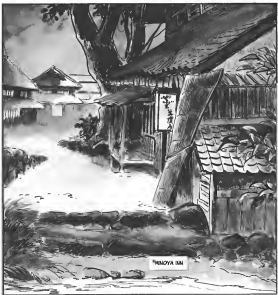


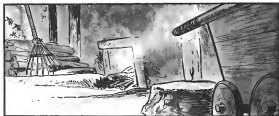


the forty-seventh

Echo of the Assassin





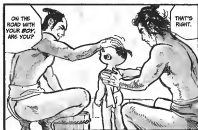










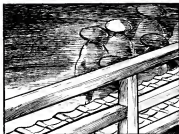


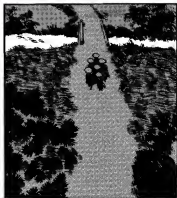


















THIS WEAPON IS KNOWN AS THE *SHINRYU-KU*, THE "BREADST CRITTER". BECAUSE IT IS FOUR SWORDS IN LENGTH-AS TALL AS A PERSON'S BREADST, MADE OF OAK, WITH A TWO-PRONGED IRON SLEEVE AT MID-STAFF FOR CATCHING AND SHAPING SWORD BLADES, AND A STAR-SHAPED THROWING CLAM ATTACHED BY A LENGTHY CHAIN A DEADLY WEAPON, ADAPTED TO BOTH OFFENSE AND DEFENSE, AND FAMED BY ANJUM SINCE THE SHANRYU-KU OF WARRING STATES.









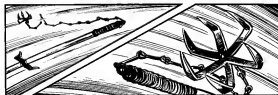




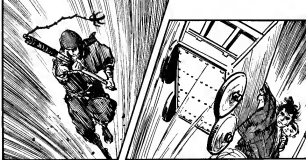


















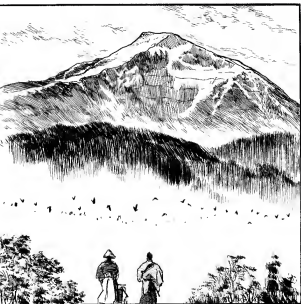












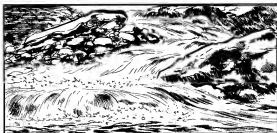
IT LOOKS SORT
OF LIKE A CARROT,
BUT IT'S GREAT FOR
SQUAT. HELPS DIGEST-
TION, BRINGS DOWN
FEVER, EVEN CURES
COLDS

YOU PICK
THE ROOTS
IN APRIL, AND
MAY, SECOND-YEAR
GROWTH. DISCARD
THE STEEL, WASH IN
FRESH WATER, AND
DRY IN THE
SUN.



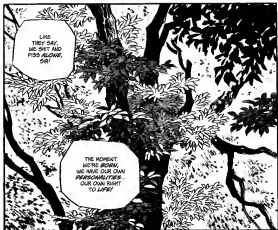
AS YOU CAN
GUESS FROM THE
NAME, YOU FIND IT
UP THERE, ON THE
FLANKS OF MOUNT
SHU!











LIKE
THEY SAY,
WE SHIT AND
PUSS ALONE,
DRI!

THE MOMENT
WE'RE BORN,
WE HAVE OUR OWN
PERSONALITIES...
OUR OWN RIGHT
TO LIFE!



NO FATHER
CAN STRIP THAT
AWAY FROM HIS
CHILD! IT'S
UNFORGEABLE!

....
....



ARE
YOU EVEN
LISTENING
??

SAY
SOMETHING,
FOR GOD'S
SAKE!

A FEW HOURS
AGO, YOU THREW
YOUR DASSER AND
KILLED A HUMAN
BEING



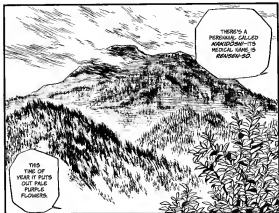




















HEH HEH
HEH... NO SACRIFICE
NEEDED! INSTEAD
YOUR WAY INTO YOUR
OPPONENT'S HEART.
WIN HIS TRUST... AND
THEN TAKE HIM
OUT!

I PLANNED IT
ALL—THE ASSASSINATION
MISSES, EVEN KILLING
ONE OF THEM MYSELF.
ALL TO GIVE YOU THE
PRIZE SHOGUN'S
SCHOOL OF FARMING!
THE ASSASSIN'S
BONUS!











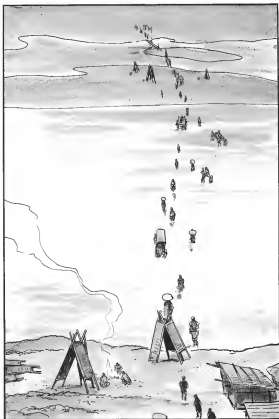




the forty-eighth

Naked Worms















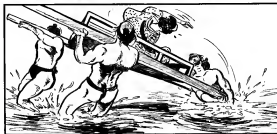
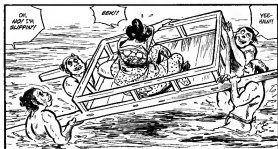


THE ŌI RIVER, ON THE BORDER
BETWEEN SURUGA AND TOTOHI, A
RIVER SO WIDE THEY SAY IT'S LIKE
LOOKING FROM THIS WORLD TO THE
NEXT. WITH THE SOUTHWIND, THE
WATERS RISE; WITH THE NORTHWIND, THE
WATERS FALL. ONE HEAVY RAIN, AND
IT'S A SWAMPY FLOODPLAIN. ALWAYS
CHANGING, NEVER STILL...

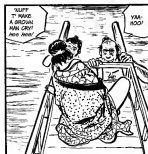
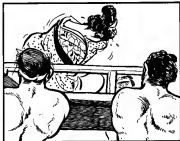
SINCE ANCIENT TIMES,
NEITHER BOAT NOR BRIDGE
HAD MASTERED THE ŌI. NOT
EVEN SEASONED TRAVELERS,
BE THEY ON HORSE OR FOOT,
COULD TRACK ITS SHIFTING
SHOALS. SOUTHWARD BOUND,
TRAVELERS STOPPED IN
KAWA, NORTHWARD BOUND
IN SHIMADA, WAITING FOR THE
WATERS TO SUBSIDE...



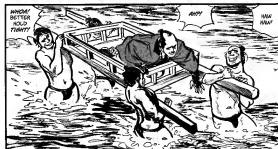












IN THOSE DAYS THE SHOGUNATE MAINTAINED SEVERAL CHECKPOINTS ON CRITICAL THOROUGHFARES, AND RELIED ON FERRY BOATS AND RIVER LABORERS FOR CROSSING THE NATION'S MANY RIVERS. IN PART IT WAS BECAUSE BRIDGE-BUILDING TECHNOLOGY WAS TOO PRIMITIVE FOR SUCH POWERFUL CURRENTS, IN PART A DELIBERATE POLICY, DESIGNED TO HINDER SURPRISS ATTACKS ON SMO.

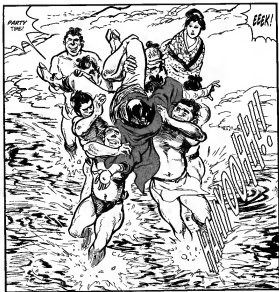
AND SO THE RIVER LABORERS BECAME THE BANE OF EVERY TRAVELER. CURSED AS *ANAGAKI-MUSHI*—"NAKED WORMS"—THEY WERE NOTORIOUS FOR EXTORTIONIST TIPS, AND FORCING FEMALE PASSENGERS TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES OR SUBMIT TO HUMILIATING FONDLEMS. COUNTLESS TRAVEL RECORDS SPEAK OF THEIR ABUSES AGAINST WOMEN.

THE *ANAGAKI-MUSHI* SYSTEM LASTED WELL INTO THE MEIJI PERIOD (1868-1912) AND JAPAN'S DREAMING TO THE WEST. EVEN ON THE ARAKAWA RIVER NEAR MODERN TOKYO, THERE WERE NO BRIDGES BUILT UNTIL 1867.





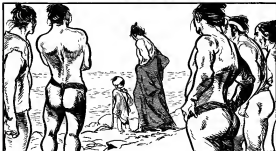








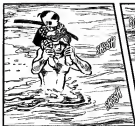








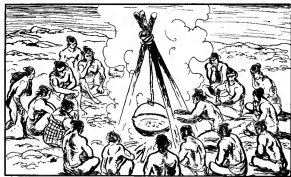
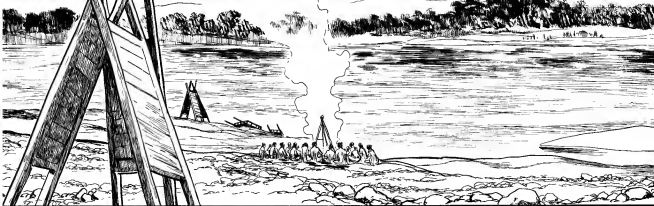


















WHEG
WAS THE
LAST TIME
VA ATOP

EIGHT
THIS
MORNING



WHEG



SAYS
THE KID
SOME
JEREMY

YAGGURY

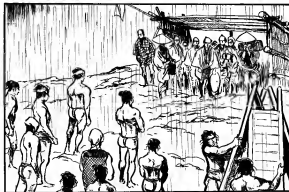












NORMALLY THE *SI* RIVER RUNS TWO SHANG FIVE SAN DEEP. WHEN THE WATERS RISE ANOTHER SHANG, IT WAS CLOSED TO HORSES. UP TO TWO SHANG OVER NORMAL, CLOSED TO PEOPLE. OVER TWO SHANG HIGH, WITH THE RIVER RUNNING FOUR SHANG FIVE SAN DEEP AND MORE, THEY WOULD DECLARE THE RIVER CLOSED.



BUT FOR THE *SI* RIVER, THE OFFICIAL LINE OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE *SI* RIVER, THE RIVER WAS NEVER CLOSED.

NO MATTER HOW DEEP THE FLOOD, TEAMS OF HAND-PICKED RIVER LABORERS TOOK THE *SI* RIVER ACROSS.



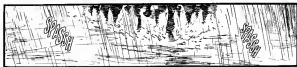














THE *SOJO-SAKO SOJO* WERE THE OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE OUT-POSTS OF THE *SAI-SUKATE*. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE *JOSEI* CASTLE WARDEN OF *OSAKA* CASTLE, FROM THE *SANDAI* REPRESENTATIVE IN THE IMPERIAL COURT CITY OF *KYOTO*, FROM *SHIMAZU* IN EVERY PART OF *JAPAN*, ALL STREAMING BACK TO *EDO* IN THEIR HEAVILY GUARDED, WATERPROOFED *BAHO* (BOXES)













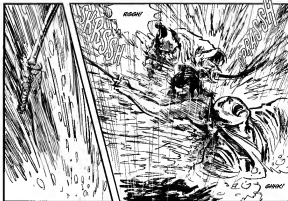








RYAAAAA!

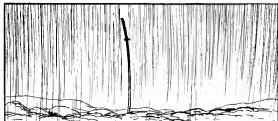










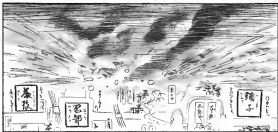


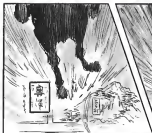
the forty-ninth



The Yagyū Letter: Prologue

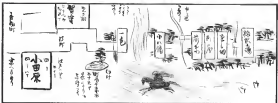
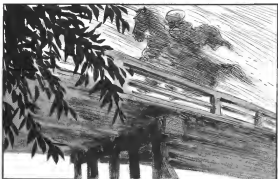


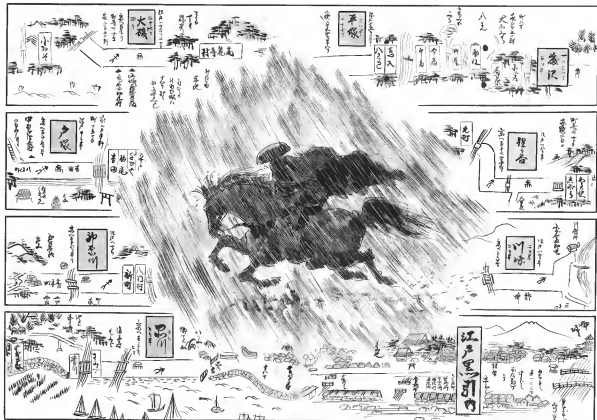


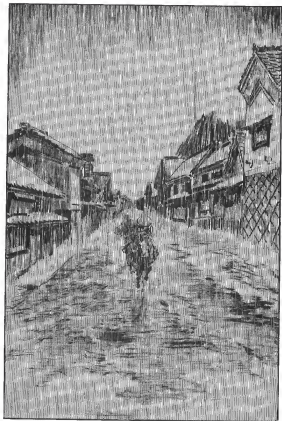






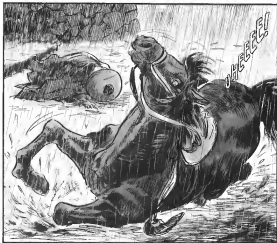






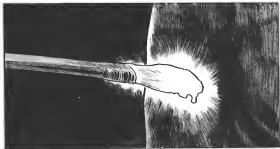












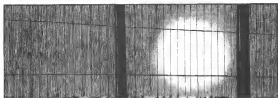


MY LORD..
AS YOU SEE,
WE HAVE AMAZINGLY
PERFECTED OUR
BLEND OF PROS-
PEROUS-SCENT
MOSES

HAHA..
IMPERFECT
NONE THE LESS!
BUT HE THE PERFECT
FOR THE SCORNER
THE BETTER!



Y-YES!
MY LORD, FOR
THE HONOR OF
THE AFFECTION-
BURN!







READY!!

DAMN YOU
DEAN ITT!! IF
YOU STOLE THAT
BOX YOU'VE SHIPPED
OUT THE DEEPEST
SECRET OF THE
URU-PAYU!!



THERE'S NO TIME
TO LOSE! WE USED THE
LETTER BACK! UNTIL NOW
WE'VE HONORED OUR PROMISE
NEVER TO ATTACK YOU HEAD-
ON! BUT DID YOU THINK THAT
WAS THE LIMIT OF
OUR POWER?



FLAUNDER
OUR SECRETS,
WILL YOU SAY
YOU HAVEN'T THE
WITS TO FIGURE THEM
OUT TO YOU IT'S
JUST ANOTHER GOLD
LETTER, NOTHING
MORE!



BUT BY
STEALING IT,
YOU'VE UNWIT-
TINGLY CHALLENGED
THE URA-YABU
DIRECTLY!

YOU'VE ENDED
OUR FACT OF YOUR
OWN AGGREDY FIGHT!
DON'T YOU SEE HOW
POWERLESS YOU
ARE?



LISTEN WELL! THE
TRUCE IS OVER! THE
URA-YABU ARE IN
FORCE TO STRIKE
DOWN OSAKI
ITTO!

WE MUST
RETAIN THE
GOTO-
BANCH!





LONG WOLF AND CLUB BOOK NINE: THE END
TO BE CONTINUED

GLOSSARY

ashigara

A lightly armed foot soldier, one of the lowest ranks of the samurai caste.

bu

A small coin, worth 1/8th of a ryō.

buke

A samurai household.

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushidō

The way of the warrior.

daikansho

The office of the *daikan*, the primary local representative of the shōgunate in territories outside of Edo. The *daikan* and his staff collected taxes owed to Edo and oversaw public works, agriculture, and other projects administered by the central government.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

Edo

The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shōgunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

han

A feudal domain.

hanishi

Samurai in the service of a *han*.

honorifics

Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Wolf and Cub: shan* – for children, young women, and close friends

shō – archaic, used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures

sen – used for superiors

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals

sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected educators, and politicians

jōdai

Castle wardens. The ranking *low* official in charge of a *daimyō*'s castle when the *daimyō* was spending his obligatory years in Edo.

kōgi kaishakunin

The shōgun's own sword, who performed executions ordered by the shōgun.

koku

A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han*'s wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

meifumadō

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

o-niwaban

A ninja. Literally "one in the garden." Ninjas had their heyday in the time of

warring states before the rise of the Tokugawa clan. Originally mercenaries serving different warlords, by the Edo period they were in the service of the central government. The most famous were the ninja of Iga and Koga, north of Kyoto. The *Kurokawa* that appear in *Love Hef and Cab* were officially the laborers and manual workers in Edo Castle. Whether they truly served as a secret spy corps is lost in history.

rendai

Platforms used for carrying travelers across rivers. Named for their resemblance to the *rendai* (Jesús platform) altar in Buddhist temples.

ryōin

Senior councilors. The inner circle of councilors directly advising the shōgun. The *ryōin* were the ultimate advisory body to the Tokugawa shōgunate's national government.

rōnin

A masterless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters (through the dissolution of *hase*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons). Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished *rōnin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryū

Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *dokei* students that sought to learn from the master.

The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school initiates.

sankin kōtai

The Tokugawa required that all *daimyō* spend every other year in Edo, with family members remaining behind when they returned to their *hase*. This practice increased Edo's control over the *daimyō*, both political and fiscal, since the cost of maintaining two separate households and traveling to and from the capital placed a huge strain on *hase* finances.

sengoku

Warring states. For two centuries between the old central rule in Kyoto and the rise of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), the last unifier of Japan, the country was in a state of anarchy, riven by constant civil war between rival warlords.

shaku

10 *sun*, approximately 30 centimeters.

shinzo

The young wife of another man.

sun

Approximately 3 centimeters.

yakuza

Japan's criminal syndicates. In the Edo period, *yakuza* were a common part of the landscape, running houses of gambling and prostitution. As long as they did not overstep their bounds, they were tolerated by the authorities, a tradition little changed in modern Japan.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Love Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Ōkami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1973, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Aramune* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryōichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Getiga Senjaku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibui*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-ban* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-ban* readers.

In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Doguski*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series,

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Koror*

Okami (*Love Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme-song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.





Water, death, and angry ninja take the forefront in this exciting volume of the legendary *Lone Wolf and Cub* series. A pitiful ferryboat girl must watch as the Lone Wolf, Ogami Itto, stands against the man she loves. A rogue swordsman-for-hire learns a valuable lesson about Bushido, the Way of the Warrior, from Ogami's steely blade. And the Lone Wolf faces the treachery of the Kurokuwa ninja clan, taking employment as a lowly river porter in a clever plan to steal the secret plans of his arch-enemy, the Yagyu clan, declaring war against them all!

"You want epic? Lone Wolf and Cub...is considered by many to be one of the best series ever in comics."

— William J. Dowling
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

■ EISNER AWARD WINNER

■ HARVEY AWARD WINNER



Front cover illustration
by FRANK MILLER
and LYNN VARLEY

子連水狼